

CONSIDERATION AND APPROVAL OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL
AUDIT PLAN FOR 2002, AND THE CREATION OF THE OFFICE
OF HISTORY AND PRESERVATION WITHIN THE OFFICE OF
THE CLERK

BUSINESS MEETING
BEFORE THE
COMMITTEE ON
HOUSE ADMINISTRATION
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
ONE HUNDRED SEVENTH CONGRESS
SECOND SESSION

Hearing Held in Washington, DC, June 26, 2002



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BUSINESS MEETING

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 26, 2002

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON HOUSE ADMINISTRATION,
Washington, DC.

The committee met, pursuant to call, at 2:10 p.m., in Room 1310, Longworth House Office Building, Hon. Robert W. Ney (chairman of the committee) presiding.

Present: Representatives Ney, Ehlers, Hoyer and Fattah.

Staff present: Jeff Janas, Professional Staff Member; Channing Nuss, Deputy Staff Director; Fred Hay, Counsel; Melody Hildebrandt, Intern; Bill Cable, Minority Staff Director; Matt Pinkus, Minority Professional Staff Member; Sterling Spriggs, Minority Technical Director; and Nuku Ofori, Staff of Mr. Fattah.

The CHAIRMAN. The committee will come to order. Today, the Committee on House Administration is conducting a business meeting to consider and approve the Inspector General Audit Plan for 2002 and a proposal by the Clerk of the House, Mr. Trandahl, to create the Office of History and Preservation, a new department within the Office of the Clerk.

We will begin with the first item on the agenda, consideration and approval of the Inspector General Audit Plan for 2002.

The Inspector General is responsible for performing audits of the financial and administrative functions of the House and joint entities, suggesting appropriate actions when warranted as a result of the audits, and reporting the results of the audits back to the Committee on House Administration as part of our oversight responsibilities of House operations. Working closely with House Administration and our House officers, the Office of the Inspector General focuses its efforts on issues of strategic importance to the House.

The Inspector General's objective, valued-added service to managers has helped to significantly improve financial management; House administrative processes; workplace issues related to health and safety; and the security, control, and integrity of the computer networks' operating and application systems and the data that they contain, which is so important to the House and the citizens of the United States.

The plan before the committee today for review and approval will continue that important work on behalf of the U.S. House. At the direction of the Committee on House Administration, the audit plan as presented will focus on the key themes of life safety, information security, and customer service to our House Members and staff.

We will also be evaluating several emerging technologies in the predeployment stage, including digitized mail, as we deploy new technology to enhance the speed and effectiveness of our work force in the House of Representatives.

I would like to thank the members of this committee and our committee staff, on a bipartisan basis, and the staff of the Office of Inspector General, who have all worked hard to create a thoughtful and important audit agenda for the House.

It is my belief that the audit plan will serve to protect and enhance our House business operations and will help ensure the financial integrity of this institution.

The Chair lays before the committee a committee resolution approving the House of Representatives Inspector General audits for 2002. The Inspector General, I would note—it is a pleasure to have you here—is available to answer questions. Are there any questions of the Inspector General?

Mr. Hoyer?

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Chairman, I do not have any questions, but I want to thank the IG for, A, his work and, B, his report and information that he has given to me in terms of what we are doing, where we are going, how we have done. I think, as I said in the past, I think the addition of this office has been a very positive addition to the operations of the House of Representatives. This was a reform that was brought in in 1995, but we had talked about it before than. Unfortunately, we had not implemented it. The Republican leadership did. I think it has been an excellent step forward, and I thank you for the work you have done.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Mr. Hoyer.

Mr. Ehlers, do you have any questions or points of discussion?

Mr. EHLERS. Why am I here?

The CHAIRMAN. You are here for two reasons, Mr. Ehlers. One, you are a very valuable member of this committee, and, as the third member present, you legally allow us to proceed.

Mr. EHLERS. I realize that.

The CHAIRMAN. The first is the most important. Would you like another couple of reasons?

Mr. EHLERS. No. I am sorry; I just raced over here, and I just got a phone call, so I may have to go and vote. At least I am here. I have no further questions.

Mr. HOYER. We better go in a hurry.

Mr. EHLERS. Mr. Chairman, I move a committee resolution approving the House of Representatives Inspector General audits for 2002 be adopted.

Mr. HOYER. Second.

The CHAIRMAN. It has been moved and seconded. The question is on the motion. All those in favor signify by saying aye.

Opposed, no.

Mr. EHLERS. May I just add, I may have questions later, and I will address them directly.

The CHAIRMAN. Without objection.

Mr. HOYER. On this side of the aisle, Mr. Chairman, we believe “Ney” is a very positive term.

The CHAIRMAN. Except when it comes to a vote, I would say. It is not that positive sometimes. Let us not have a “positive” vote today.

The motion is agreed to, and the committee resolution approving the House of Representatives Inspector General audits for 2002 is adopted.

I want to thank you. It was your compelling testimony, Mr. Inspector General. Thank you. Appreciate it.

The committee will now consider the creation of the Office of History and Preservation, a new department within the Office of the Clerk, Mr. Trandahl.

The Clerk has requested the committee approve the creation of the Office of History and Preservation within the Office of the Clerk. This action would involve mitigating the current Historical Services Division from within the Clerk’s Legislative Resources Department to a stand-alone department. The request includes a proposed reclassification of position 19–068, Manager, Historical Services, to Chief, Office of History and Preservation.

The proposed reorganization represents the culmination of a 6-year effort by the House through the Office of the Clerk, at the direction of the Committee on House Administration, to fill the void created by the unfilled House Historian position to establish professional archival and curatorial response and support for House records, arts, and artifacts.

Without objection, I will enter the rest of this in the record.

[The information follows:]

CREATION OF OFFICE OF HISTORY AND PRESERVATION

The Clerk on March 26, 2002, requested the Committee approve the creation of an Office of History and Preservation within the Office of the Clerk. This action would involve migrating the current Historical Services division (eight positions) from within the Clerk’s Legislative Resource Department to status as a stand alone department. The request includes the proposed reclassification of position 19–068, Manager, Historical Services (HS–11) to Chief, Office of History and Preservation.

The proposed reorganization represents the culmination of a six-year effort by the House, through the Office of the Clerk, to fill the void owing to the unfilled House Historian position and to establish professional archival and curatorial support for House records, art, and artifacts. The effort began with the Committee’s approval in 1995 of the creation of the Legislative Resource Center (LRC) as a department of the Clerk. The LRC was a consolidation of smaller separate departments of the Clerk, together with functions acquired through the 1995 reorganization. It was intended then that the LRC serve as the host entity toward the development of a comprehensive historical and preservation resource for the House—one on par with the Senate and other governmental entities. By the year 2000, the Committee had approved the creation within the LRC of an historical services division and the appointment of a manger, which was soon followed by the appointment of an archival specialist. The preservation component was completed early this year with the appointment of a curator. The unit currently consists of eight positions, which would transfer to the proposed new department.

The Clerk’s proposal seeks to guarantee the continued effectiveness of the current division. Separation from the LRC will allow for more streamlined management and responsiveness for services. Furthermore, as a department and not a subordinate subdivision, the division and its personnel will be more credibly perceived and regarded by entities of the Congress, the government and professions. The Clerk has pointed out that the current Historical Services division is already actively engaged with an array of projects commensurate with those that would be within the purview of the new department. It is managing the publication of five congressionally approved historical publications. Since putting on-line in 1997 the Biographical Directory of the United States Congress, it has since launched the first comprehensive update and verification of the over 10,000 House entries. For the first time, the House has the benefit of a professional archival staff, which in addition to admin-

istering the Clerk's House Rule VII responsibilities, has implemented an educational records management outreach program for Committees and Members. The new curator has been tasked by the Clerk to focus on an inventory and preservation program for House art and artifacts, beginning with House Committee Chairmen portraits. With the curator, the Clerk for the first time can render authoritative curatorial support to the House Fine Arts Board. The historical, archival, and curatorial expertise of the division are tapped regularly by the House in matters pertaining to the Capitol Visitor Center.

The CHAIRMAN. It is a very good program. I think it is a great job done by the Clerk's Office with a lot of insight, and I believe on a historical basis it is going to be of tremendous value for this House to preserve the history, keep up with the history, and have it available to the citizens of the United States. So I commend you on that.

With that, I lay before the committee a committee resolution approving the creation of the Office of History and Preservation. The Clerk is here, Mr. Trandahl, to make a statement and see if you have any questions.

**STATEMENT OF JEFF TRANDAH, CLERK, UNITED STATES
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

Mr. TRANDAH. Actually, what I will do is I will submit the statement for the record and the background pieces, but if there are any questions that anyone has—

[The statement of Mr. Trandahl follows:]

Mr. Chairman, Members of the Committee, thank you for inviting me to appear before the meeting of the Committee.

I appreciate having this opportunity, Mr. Chairman, to explain how in the past six years, through the support of this Committee, the Office of the Clerk has developed and delivered historical services program needs to the House of Representatives. As part of that effort, we have professionalized and broadened two closely related disciplines: archival services in support of House Rule VII records requirements and courtesy consultation for Members; and curatorial services in support of the Clerk's responsibilities to the House Fine Arts Board.

With the continued vacancy since January 1995 of the office of House Historian, the Committee has enabled my office to incrementally meet the demand from the House and the public for historical services. The effort began in 1995 with the creation of the Legislative Resource Center (LRC) within the Office of the Clerk. That reorganization helped to better integrate within the Clerk's organization the Document Room responsibility it had acquired from the defunct Office of the Doorkeeper and established an organizational structure within which to cultivate and design the foundations for the comprehensive historical services required by the House. By 1997, the resources of the LRC had achieved two significant accomplishments: the first continuing archival education and consultation program for House Committees and Members, and, the launching, with the Senate, of the on-line version of the Biographical Directory of the United States Congress. With the latter, the LRC took on a major responsibility previously administered by the former House Historian.

By the year 2000 and with the enthusiastic support and approval of the Committee, our goal of establishing a credible historical services operation became a reality with the creation of an historical services unit within the LRC and the appointment of a professional manager, who had formerly been affiliated with the Center for Legislative Archives of the National Archives and Records Administration. That appointment was followed shortly thereafter by the addition of a professional archivist and early this year, a professional curator. Complemented by five additional support positions that the Committee approved, the House for the first time has an historical, records, and arts resource now on par with the Senate and capable of managing the many new responsibilities already required by the House as well as those that will be needed for the Capitol Visitor Center.

I am grateful, Mr. Chairman, that the Committee is considering my request to establish the current historical services unit of the LRC as a new department of the Office of the Clerk and to support the necessary funding for its operation. This action is necessary for practical as well as symbolic reasons. Although the LRC served

as a valuable incubator of sorts for the development of the unit, the unit has matured sufficiently to merit commensurate management and operational parity as a department. Symbolically, the status of the unit with the Clerk's office counts to its credibility. As a department in its own right within the Office of the Clerk, the Office of History and Preservation, as it is being proposed to be known, would more closely mirror the organizational status of its counterparts in the U.S. Senate, which reside under the Secretary of the Senate. Such departmental status is critical to earning credibility with other governmental entities, relevant professional groups, and the general public.

Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to report to you the satisfaction we already enjoy by having a full team on board. Our historical staff is at work on new editions of congressionally authorized publications, including Asian and Pacific Islander Americans in Congress; Black Americans in Congress; Hispanic Americans in Congress; and Women in Congress. They have been incorporated into the exhibit planning process for the Capitol Visitor Center, and are engaged in a major verification and updating project for the thousands of House entries in the Biographical Directory of the United States Congress. Our archivist has quickly secured our position within the professional archival associations, enabling us to better serve Members who require guidance in retiring their personal congressional papers. Now as never before, we have been able to proactively educate and counsel House committee staff on records management procedures, which will stimulate greater compliance with House Rule VII and ensure consistent archiving of the non-current records of the House. Finally, I am pleased to report that our new curator is working on multiple fronts in support of the House Fine Arts Board.

Mr. Chairman, I appreciate not only your leadership but also your good counsel. The progress we have made since your becoming Chairman of the Committee has been remarkable. I am also grateful for the guidance and assistance I have received from the Committee staff, with whom I have the pleasure of working with on a regular basis. This completes my statement and I am happy to answer any questions you may have. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Hoyer?

Mr. HOYER. Jeff, the Office of Historian has been vacant, I guess, since 1995 or early 1996, I forget exactly when. In light of what we are doing here, what ramifications, if any, does that have to that particular position? I know it is vacant and has been for 5 or 6 years.

Mr. TRANDAH. Yes, Mr. Hoyer, the Office of the Historian, as you know, was created back in 1987, or 1989, to sort of correspond with the celebration of the bicentennial of the Constitution. And then subsequently in January 1995, with the realignment of staffs, they eliminated the House Historian in January, February of 1995.

The Clerk's Office then became responsible for all of those historical functions. Incrementally, we have been trying to add in and even improve upon what was previously done in that Historian's Office, because we were building in a lot more archival staff; we are building in a lot more curatorial function as well as this publication and historical research function.

The House Historian by title is not created in this office. I am hoping that that is one of the next incremental steps that we can take in this process. But as you may be aware, the House rules sort of contradict me in this fashion, because they still allow the Speaker to be involved in the selection or management of the House Historian.

In the perfect world—in my perfect world, the House Historian would be the head of this department and be staffed by these people. There are other people in the Capitol who obviously have a different opinion where they would prefer it would be bifurcated, and there would be a House Historian on one side and the staff on the other side doing the nuts and bolts.

So we are still working on that issue. You have every commitment from me that that is exactly the direction I want to go. But——

Mr. HOYER. We are not there yet.

Mr. TRANDAHL. Yes, we are not quite there. Hopefully sooner than later.

Mr. EHLERS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

On this one, I have quite a few opinions and thoughts. I heartily approve of this, and as the Clerk knows, and as the chairman of this committee knows, I have been advocating for this activity for some 6 or 7 years now.

I find it incomprehensible that the House of Representatives would be without an Historian, particularly since the position was created in law. What bothers me even more, however, is the archival aspects of this position and of the House. I am amazed at how poorly the archival records of the House are accumulated and kept. There is no standard, for example, among the Members of the House as to which of their papers they should keep. There is no recommendation as to what should be done with them after they leave office, and at this point, some Members will give them to a local college, some will burn them, some will give them to the House Historian. There is just no uniformity at all and no overall direction.

Not every scrap of paper generated in every office is worth keeping, but there is a considerable amount of activity in the House that should be archived, and we need some very knowledgeable people determining what must be archived, setting standards for the committees particularly, but also individual Members, as to what should be archived and how it should be archived.

I know, for example, that a number of committees and people are preserving the records on disks. Now, that is extremely dangerous because algorithms change, methods of storage change, and I have seen this happen in State government and local government. Everything is archived, then they get new computers, they have new memory, and they do not upgrade. The algorithms are different, and within 10 years, or sometimes even 5 years, all the previous information is lost simply because none of them have old enough computers or old enough software to read it and interpret it.

So we desperately need standards for archival activity and also some guidance for Members as to what should be archived and what shouldn't. So I heartily support this proposal, and I think it is something that we should have done 8 years ago had it not been for opposition from some Members of the House and, in fact, some members of this committee.

Mr. TRANDAHL. As Mr. Ehlers and I have talked personally several times that it is a large initiative in terms of this proposal. As well, I just want to thank the committee. I mean, we have gone from a place, Mr. Ehlers, where we had two positions that basically dealt with the archiving and the research part. In the last 2 years here we have been able to go from two to eight positions with the help of this committee here. And subsequently, now getting this to an independent, freestanding office, and giving it the profile and the respect it deserves, hopefully, within the institution, we will be

able to build upon the programs we have already started, whether it is archiving or curatorial or the research or the documents.

There are four publications that the committee has authorized that we create, The Women in Congress, Black Americans in Congress, Hispanic Americans in Congress and Asian Americans in Congress, in conjunction with the Library.

Mr. EHLERS. May I add, Mr. Chairman, it is not that this is going to cost us a lot of money, because we are doing it in a haphazard way now, but also the expertise. We have expertise at beck and call at the Federal Archives, but also at the Library of Congress. Not that they always agree on how to do it, but nevertheless, we have two great sources of free assistance there.

The CHAIRMAN. The Chair will note there are no current Members sitting at the dais who opposed this at any particular time. So we do not need a roll call.

With that, Mr. Ehlers, I would entertain a motion.

Mr. FATTAH. Mr. Chairman?

The CHAIRMAN. I am sorry, Mr. Fattah.

Mr. FATTAH. If I could just ask, you mentioned a Fine Arts Board in your statement.

Mr. TRANDAHL. Yes.

Mr. FATTAH. Can you tell me what the focus of—

Mr. TRANDAHL. Yes. The Fine Arts Board is an entity that consists of the House members of the Joint Committee on the Library. It is a group that oversees with me—as the Clerk, I have the curatorial responsibility of what is called the House collection. Basically a lot of the paintings, the statues, even the architectural features in some of the buildings here we have responsibility for, and that Board oversees, for example, if the chairman of a committee is getting a portrait painted, it has to be adopted and accepted by the Fine Arts Board before it can become a part of the House collection.

Mr. FATTAH. But all of the art work in the House is part of the arts collection, not just the portraits of former Chairs?

Mr. TRANDAHL. Right. There are actually three separate collections on Capitol Hill. This is where it gets a little confusing. The Senate has a collection. The House has a collection. And then is there a joint collection that is overseen by the Capital Preservation Commission and also the Joint Committee on the Library. That joint collection, for example, the statues in Statuary Hall, the 100 that were authorized from the States, we have 97 currently, those were actually accepted by the Joint Committee on the Library because they could be located in the House or the Senate side.

Mr. FATTAH. I do understand. Thank you.

I am in full support of what you want to do. I would be interested in you sharing with the committee in terms of the House collection to what degree it depicts in any of its artistic renderings African Americans and others.

Mr. TRANDAHL. Sure.

Mr. FATTAH. There seems to be a dearth of that in the House's collection, and what you might want to do about that might be of interest to the committee.

Mr. TRANDAHL. And just so you know, we are at a real opportunity, I think, relative to the Capitol and artworks just with the addition of this Capitol Visitors Center. It allows us great oppor-

tunity to be adding to the collection where we find holes in history and representation. So——

Mr. FATTAH. There is one hole that I have taken note of. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. That is well noted and appreciated.

The Chair recognizes Mr. Ehlers.

Mr. EHLERS. Mr. Chairman, I move that the committee resolution approving the creation of the Office of History and Preservation be adopted.

The CHAIRMAN. The question is on the motion.

All those in favor, signify by saying aye.

Those opposed, nay.

With that, the ayes have it, the motion is agreed to, and the committee resolution approving the creation of the Office of History and Preservation is adopted.

I ask unanimous consent that Members have 7 legislative days to submit material into the record and for materials submitted by the Inspector Genral and the Clerk of the House to be entered at the appropriate place in the record.

Without objection, the material will be so entered.

[The information follows:]

COMMITTEE RESOLUTION 107-6, THE CREATION OF THE OFFICE OF HISTORY AND PRESERVATION

Resolved, That the Committee on House Administration hereby approves the proposal to create The Office of History and Preservation, a new division within the Office of the Clerk of the House of Representatives, attached hereto and incorporated herein.

The CHAIRMAN. I ask unanimous consent that the staff be authorized to make technical and conforming changes on all matters considered by the committee in today's meeting.

Without objection, so ordered.

Having completed our business, the committee is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 2:30 p.m., the committee was adjourned.]